

## Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /090 W

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R 200138Z JUN 75

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2806

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC

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TAGS ELAB, AS

SUBJ: SOUTH AUSTRALIA PREMIER CALLS SNAP ELECTION

1. IN LATE EVENING JUNE 18TH, LABOR PREMIER DON DUNSTAN OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AFTER TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH CABINET AND PARTY OFFICIALS, ANNOUNCED HE HAD SOUGHT AND OBTAINED STATE GOVERNOR'S APPROVAL TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT AND SET DATE OF JULY SECOND FOR STATE-WIDE ELECTION. AT STAKE WILL BE TOTAL LOWER HOUSE AND HALF UPPER HOUSE IN STATE PARLIAMENT.

2. IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF DUNSTAN ACTION WAS OPPOSITION-  
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CONTROLLED UPPER HOUSE'S REJECTION OF DUNSTAN'S

PLAN TO TURNOVER OWNERSHIP, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF STATE RAILWAY SYSTEM TO FEDERAL GOVT; IN RETURN FOR VERY GENEROUS PAYMENT. DUNSTAN WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT BY SO DOING, UPPER HOUSE LOST TWENTY-SIX MILLION DOLLARS THIS YEAR AND THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS NEXT YEAR, BADLY NEEDED TO MEET PROJECTED SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BUDGET DEFICIT.

3. CONGEN SOUGHT REACTION JUNE 19TH FROM IAN MESSENGER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, REGIONAL COMMERCIAL TELEVISION NETWORK AND EXECUTIVE IN INFLUENTIAL MEDIA CHAIN, WHOM POST HAS FOUND KEEN OBSERVER SOUTH AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL SCENE, BUT WITH ADMITTEDLY PRO-LIBERAL COUNTRY PARTY BIAS. MESSENGER OBVIOUSLY UPSET, CHARACTERISING OPPOSITION MOVE IN STATE SENATE AS "GIVING BIRTHDAY CAKE" TO DUNSTAN. MESSENGER FAILS TO UNDERSTAND WHY OPPOSITION FORCING STATE ELECTORATE TO WASTE ITS TIME ON SUCH A POOR ISSUE. HE POINTED OUT THAT ALP DUNSTAN CAN RUN QUICK, BRIEF ELECTION CAMPAIGN ON PURELY STATE ISSUES AND THUS AVOID ANY BACKLASH FROM UNPOPULAR NATIONAL POSITIONS OF ALP FEDERAL GOVT IN CANBERRA. DUNSTAN, CONGEN INFERS FROM MESSENGER, WILL HAVE NEW "THREE YEAR LEASE ON LIFE" DURING WHICH HE CAN INCREASE HIS POPULARITY WITHOUT PAYING PRICE FOR ATTACHMENT TO UNPOPULAR FEDERAL PARTY. MESSENGER FEELS LIBERAL MOVEMENT, BREAK AWAY FROM ORTHODOX LIBERAL PARTY AND LED BY SENATOR STEELE HALL, WILL CERTAINLY ENTER SLATE OF ITS OWN AND WILL TAKE VOTES FROM REGULAR LIBERAL PARTY ORGANISATION. HE SAYS ANY LIBERAL MOVEMENT SUCCESS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA WILL INCREASE "CLOUD" OF NEW GROUP BOTH IN STATE AND NATIONALLY.

4. LABATT JUNE 19TH TALKED TO GEORGE WHITTAN, SECRETARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA LABOR PARTY AND FOUND HIM IN JUBILANT MOOD. PREDICTABLY, WHITTAN SAID HE WAS "GOING TO WIN AND WIN BIG". HE ENUMERATED SEAT AFTER SEAT WHERE LABOR EXPECTED TO BENEFIT FROM TWO TO FOUR PER CENT SWING TO ADD TO SEATS THAT THEY ALREADY HOLD. ACCORDING TO WHITTAN, THERE ARE NOW NO TROUBLE SPOTS FOR ALP WHERE ITS SITTING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEMBERS COULD CONCEIVABLY BE OUSTED. INCIDENTALLY, WHITTAN EXPECTS TO WIN HIS PERSONAL RACE AND ENTER STATE PARLIAMENT LOWER HOUSE.

5. ALSO, JUNE 19TH, LABATT TALKED TO JIMMY SHANNON, SECRETARY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL, WHO REPORTED TOTAL EFFORT OF HIS ORGANISATION WOULD BE DEVOTED TO CAMPAIGN DURING NEXT THREE WEEKS.

IMPORTANT NEGOTIATIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUSPENDED, AND SHANNON EXPECTS CONSIDERABLE ORGANISATIONAL POWER OF TRADE UNIONS TO BE CONCENTRATED ON "SWING SEATS" THROUGHOUT STATE. SHANNON FIRMLY PREDICTED ELECTION OF "BUD" ABBOTT, SECRETARY OF THE VEHICLE BUILDERS' EMPLOYEES' FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA, (SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH), TO SAFE LOWER CHAMBER SEAT.

6. COMMENT: DUNSTAN'S ACTION CAME AS RESULT OF FINAL IRRITATION IN PREMIER'S LONG STRUGGLE WITH OPPOSITION-DOMINATED UPPER HOUSE. LIBERAL PARTY STATEMENTS EARLY JUNE 19TH, SHOW THEY WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE AND HAVE NOT YET RATIONALISED SHAPE OF CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, DUNSTAN ALSO SUCCEEDED IN SURPRISING HIS OWN ORGANISATION, SEVERAL SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY STALWARTS ARE ABSENT FROM SCENE. SUCH STAR PERFORMERS AS MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS, CLYDE CAMERON, IS IN EUROPE; BOB HAWKE, ALP PRESIDENT, AND HEAD OF FEDERAL ACTU IS IN GENEVA AND WILL BE IN YUGOSLAVIA; MICK YOUNG SOUTH AUSTRALIA MHR AND PAST FEDERAL SECRETARY OF ALP IS IN HONG KONG; JIM DUNFORD, SECRETARY OF AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' UNION, IS HEADING DELEGATION OF SHEEP SHEARERS ON VISIT TO CHINA. LABATT PREDICTS ALL OR MOST OF THSE WILL QUICKLY JOIN PARADE TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA WHERE EXPECTED SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN OF LABOR PARTY WILL ATTRACT GREAT ATTENTION TO OFFSET BAD PUBLICITY NOW BEING GENERATED FOR PARTY IN LAUNCESTON BY-ELECTION. ALP SOURCES INDICATE MAN LEAST NEEDED BY DUNSTAN IS PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM, WHOSE EFFORTS TO EXPLOIT SCENE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROVIDE REPORTABLE TIDBITS.

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